



The Journal

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WRNMMC Staff Supports USNS Comfort



Photo by MCSN Kameren Guy Hodnett

Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) anchored off the coast of Nicaragua May 24 during Continuing Promise 2015.

**By Sharon
Renee Taylor
WRNMMC Public
Affairs Staff Writer**

"Even in the middle of the ocean, the 'spirit of jointness' is alive," wrote Army Capt. Rory Walton from the high seas of the Caribbean.

The operating room (OR) nurse assigned to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) is one of 43 WRNMMC staffers deployed aboard USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) for the Continuing Promise 2015 (CP-15) humanitarian mission to Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.

The mission is a U.S. Southern Command-sponsored and U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet-conducted deployment for civil-military operations including medical, dental, veterinary, and engineering support along with disaster response to partner nations.

Walton joined the Navy

ship April 1 in Norfolk, Va., for a six-month deployment. She called it a "unique opportunity," with Sailors, Airmen and Public Health Service members to continue to develop the WRNMMC interoperability between the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Public Health Service. The Soldier said she considered the professional development and teamwork on the Comfort "outstanding."

"Having the opportunity to work together with our friends and partners in this mission setting allows for the sharing of best practices and ideas," she said. "It further enables all of us to build partner capacity and promote collaboration [as well as] partnerships in order to meet challenges together and prepare for future missions, contingencies and response efforts."

In addition to nurses like Walton, WRNMMC also deployed a general surgeon, pediatric surgeon, plastic surgeon and several surgical residents, along with



Photo by MC2 Derek Paumen

Army Capt. Rory Walton, a native of El Paso, Texas, and an operating room nurse assigned to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, left, and Lt. Cmdr. William Rolfes, a native of New Port Richey, Fla., and a registered nurse anesthetist assigned to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va., prepare to move a Salvadoran patient after surgery aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) during Continuing Promise June 18.

corpsmen to support the mission. A WRNMMC obstetrician-gynecologist also joined the group, and assisted many women on the Comfort's stop in Jamaica.

USNS Comfort Medical Treatment Facility Commanding Officer Navy Capt. (Dr.) Christine Sears often works in tandem with the Comfort's OR staff for complex pelvic surgery cases. Sears completed a fellowship, and served as a staff urologist at WRNMMC as well as executive assistant to former WRNMMC commander Rear Adm. (Dr.) Al-

ton L. Stocks between 2011 and 2012.

"Women's health continues to be very important to all of the host nations that we are visiting during our CP-15 mission," Walton said. "Our gynecological surgery team has been inundated with patients at all of our completed mission stops."

The Comfort conducted surgery in Belize, Guatemala, Jamaica, Nicaragua, and Panama, according to the WRNMMC Soldier. After completing work at the sixth mission stop in El Sal-

vador, five mission stops remain: Columbia, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Honduras.

"As a team, we begin [in] each country the same," Walton explained. "We stage our surgical supplies and pre-plan each mission stop. Because surgery uses a significant amount of resources and consumable supplies, this is no small feat. Upon entry to the country, we immediately set up a surgical screening site in coordination with each country's ministry of health."

The Comfort arrives

to crowds of potential patients, according to the OR nurse who specializes in open-heart surgery. Over the next two days, the team screens and books up to 100 patients for surgery.

"Because certain health conditions and comorbidities can disqualify someone for surgery, it is important we maintain a high standard to ensure the safety of those in our care. We work together with the host nation, ministry of health representatives and medi-

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Commandant's Column

Team NDW,
As I assume my duties as the 89th Commandant of Naval District Washington, I want to thank you for the warm welcome you've extended to me and my family. It's an honor and a privilege to serve with you in this historic and storied place. In my short time onboard, your dedication, professionalism, and teamwork is evident in the folks I've met and the places I've visited. I look forward to working with you to execute our vitally important mission and support our men and women in uniform and their families.

I also look forward to getting around the Region soon to meet you, see your duties and responsibilities, understand your challenges and hear your ideas for improvement/change. NDW continues to excel every day at supporting the Navy's primary warfighting mission.



Rear Adm.
Yancy Lindsey
NDW 89th
Commandant

“NDW continues to excel every day at supporting the Navy’s primary warfighting mission.”

From renewable energy and conservation programs, to world class wounded warrior care, to a center of excellence for naval aviation, to a flagship educational institution where the Navy is developing tomorrow's leaders, and many places in between, you are providing sustainable facilities and meaningful quality of life programs to allow our more than 200 mission-oriented tenant commands to focus on their operational missions.

In closing, I wish for you and your family and friends an enjoyable and safe summer season. Thank you again for the warm welcome, and for your commitment and dedication. What you do each and every day makes a difference for our Navy and our Nation.

Bethesda Notebook

Fisher House Open House

The Fisher House Foundation is hosting an open house on Wednesday from noon to 3 p.m. at Fisher Houses I and III to celebrate its 25th anniversary. For more information call Fisher House Manager Kenneth Merritt at (301) 295-5334, or email kemerritt@fisherhousebethesda.org

Bystander Intervention Training

Navy Bystander Intervention to the Fleet Training is held every Friday through Aug. 21. The training is mandatory for Sailors to provide them with instruction to help recognize potential negative situations and how to safely intervene. For times, locations and more information, call HM1 William F. Davis at 301-319-4609, or email William.f.davis3.mil@mail.mil.

NCR-MD Town Hall

Rear Adm. Raquel C. Bono, director of the National Capital Region Medical Directorate, will host the NCR-MD quarterly town hall on July 21 at 7 a.m. in the Memorial Auditorium. All Walter Reed National Military Medical Center staff members are encouraged to attend.

2016 Base Guide Updates Needed

NSAB and WRNMMC Public Affairs staff are currently preparing the 2016 NSAB Base Guide, and we need your help to ensure it is as accurate as possible when printed. This information includes locations and phone numbers. Commands and organizations are encouraged to review their information in the 2015 Base Guide: <http://epublish.panaprint.com/publication/?i=233365>. Provide WRNMMC updates to Sarah Marshall (sarah.e.marshall25.civ@mail.mil; 295-5727) or NSAB and all other commands to Ronald Inman (Ronald.d.inman.civ@mail.mil; 295-1803).

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Remember Crosswalk Safety this Summer

Look Up, Not at Phone when Crossing the Street

By Andrew Damstedt
NSAB Public Affairs staff writer

More injuries are occurring each year nationally as people look down at their smartphones while walking – and while there have been no incidents reported on-board Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB), the base's safety manager said he's heard of some close calls.

"They have their faces down and eyes focused on their smart phones while walking around the installation, including while crossing the street," NSAB Safety Manager Jim Ganz said. "I have actually seen occasions where someone stops in the middle of the roadway to tend to something on his/her phone."

The National Safety Council reported in June that distracted walking injuries have increased parallel to the increase in cell phone usage since 2000, and Ganz said he has noticed distracted walking increasing in

the past couple years on the installation. While he said he hasn't seen any formal accident or injury reports, Ganz said he's heard plenty of anecdotal evidence of pedestrian/vehicle incidents.

"However, when discussing safety risk, 'near-miss' incidents can be just as important as actual accidents," he said. "I have seen several near miss incidents (about a couple each month) when I'm out and about that fortunately have not been accidents ... the driver was able to stop in time to avoid colliding with the pedestrian."

That's why Ganz wants to reiterate crosswalk safety with the most important safety tip to only cross the street after looking up and down the road for oncoming traffic and only crossing when it's clear to do so. Other tips he shared were to only cross the street at a crosswalk, obey all pedestrian crosswalk signals and to not cross the street between two parked vehicles.

He also advised people

to avoid distractions by not looking at their phone while crossing the street and if using headphones to keep one ear clear.

Drivers, he said, should always yield to pedestrians in crosswalks – reduce speed when approaching a crosswalk and prepare to stop, and to not pass vehicles already stopped at a crosswalk.

There are a few road crossings on the installation that Ganz said warrant extra caution. Those include:

- North Palmer Road/Brown Drive – it's a busy crossing generally and both pedestrians and drivers can behave unpredictably.

- North Palmer Road – just west of Roosevelt Circle – people exit from the side doors of the building and cross the street as a shortcut to the G-Lot between the crosswalks. He advised people to take more time and use the crosswalks on the east and west sides of the parking lot.

- South Palmer Road just south of Building 10 – the traffic direction in

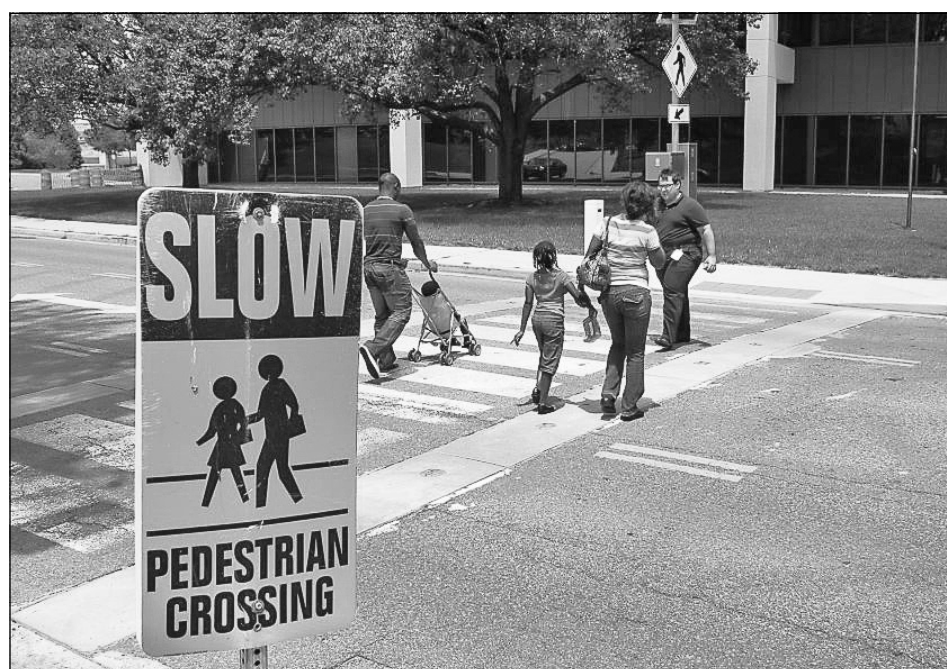


Photo by Andrew Damstedt

Pedestrians use the crosswalk Tuesday in front of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's Building 10. Distracted walking has caused more injuries nationwide each year since 2000, and Naval Support Activity Bethesda Safety Manager Jim Ganz said he's seen near-misses on the installation because people are looking at their phones instead of crossing the street safely.

the center lane flip-flops depending on the time of day but while there are several crosswalks here, sometimes pedestrians cross wherever they want.

- South Palmer Road/South Wood Road – Vehicles turning from South Wood Road to South Palmer Road do not have a stop sign and pedestrians here tend to spread out beyond the actual crosswalk.

Off the installation, he said pedestrians

shouldn't cross Wisconsin Avenue at the North Gate (Gate 1) because there is no crosswalk there – instead pedestrians should use the crosswalk at the South Gate (Gate 2). But, even at the South Gate crosswalk, pedestrians exhibit risky behavior by not waiting for the signal to cross or crossing the road well outside of the crosswalk, he said.

"This is a busy intersection with all sorts of vehicular activities go-

ing on; it is usually well clogged during the afternoon rush hours," he said. "Pedestrians should wait at the corner and cross when the signal allows them to do so."

Crosswalks on base are evaluated regularly and repainted when they fade too much to be easily recognized, said Ganz, who also evaluates traffic and pedestrian patterns to advocate for additional safe crossing areas when needed.

Operation Teddy Bear Drive Brings Smiles to Kids in Need



Courtesy photo

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class May Htini gives away stuffed animals to patients treated by Walter Reed National Military Medical Center staff members as part of a two-week Medical Readiness Training Exercise (MEDRETE) in the Dominican Republic this spring.

WRNMMC Craniofacial Team Provides Care in Dominican Republic

By MC1 (AW) Chris Krucke
WRNMMC Public Affairs staff writer

Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Amber Barak packed her car with stuffed animals before heading to this year's Teddy Bear Drive at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC).

The Sailor, along with several others, recently collected more than 300 stuffed animals for children receiving medical care in

the Dominican Republic. The stuffed toys helped boost the morale of the young patients, who underwent various hand, plastic and reconstructive procedures as part of a two-week Medical Readiness Training Exercise (MEDRETE) which WRNMMC staff members have participated in for more than a decade.

This was the second year for the stuffed toy drive, which Barak began last year when she was non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the Plastic and Re-

constructive Surgery Clinic. This year, she was assisted in the drive by HM2 Crystal Rocha and HM3 Adina Perlow of the clinic.

Air Force Lt. Col. (Dr.) Kerry Latham, a WRNMMC plastic surgeon, explained the stuffed animals helped ease the anxiety and recovery of the patients, who received care for cleft lip and palate, hand, craniofacial abnormalities and other concerns at the Hospital Central de las Fuerzas Ar-

See TEDDY page 6

NASA Astronaut Visits USO

By MC3 Hank Gettys
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer

Editor's note: This is the second part in a two part story on National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Astronaut, Navy Capt. Barry E. "Butch" Wilmore, who visited the United Services Organization Warrior and Family Center at Bethesda on Naval Support Activity Bethesda June 19.

Wilmore held a meet and greet with service members and their families, along with signing autographs, posing for pictures and answering any questions they may have had.

After the event, Wilmore sat down with The Journal for a casual interview about his time in the Navy and as an astronaut.

Q: Why do you think it is important to share your story with service members and the general public?

A: We are beings that are created to interact with one another and to share with one another, and I can go to space and I can do some incredible things and see some incredible sights, but what makes it enjoyable is when you share it, when you talk about it and share it and share pictures and videos and just discuss and share it with others. Anything truly meaningful is even more so when you have the opportunity to share it. I've realized that it is a very unique position. There are less than 550 people in the history of mankind that have left the planet, and I realize

that it is a very unique position or opportunity and very unique things that I have been able to experience, and it's something that many are interested in. I am too, that's why I chose to strive to go to this position because I am interested in it and there are others who haven't had the opportunity, or won't have the opportunity to experience it, and to share it with them is important. There are things I've never done that I am intrigued by, and people tell me about them; I've always been very inquisitive. Certainly with our military, there are individuals throughout our military, Navy included, that sacrifice time from their families and have to go do things that are in support of our nation's



Photo by MC3 Hank Gettys

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Astronaut, Navy Capt. Barry E. "Butch" Wilmore met with service members during his visit to the United Services Organization Warrior and Family Center at Bethesda on Naval Support Activity Bethesda June 19.

interests, and it's kind of a way to meet them and say 'Hey, thanks for your service.' We all do different things, there are a variety of different things we are all about, but the chance to do that and share that, I am humbled by the opportunity to do that.

Q: What advice do you have for Sailors who are striving to achieve their goals, to achieve them as you did in becoming an astronaut?

A: You can put a lot of undue, useless stress on yourself by fretting about the situation that you are in. You can look at the beauty of the sea, the comradery you build with your shipmates, the job you are doing, the reason you are there to begin with. It is an honorable profession, and it means a lot to our nation; it is the 'make or break' for our nation. We have to have people who are willing to sacrifice and do these things to live the life that we all enjoy. And to do those things, and not the fact that 'oh

my goodness this is the worst,' you can focus on the bad and you can focus on that and make it awful for yourself. There is no reason for that and there is no reason to fret over the job you are doing now. You aspire to do whatever, you train, you go to school, you take classes and you do whatever to afford yourself other opportunities. That journey is enjoyable, you know. We always seem to look at the destination and say, 'ah, when I get there, it's going to be great' instead of enjoying the journey you are on. So I'd say focus on the journey, you've got to keep the destination in sight, but I'd say focus on the journey and enjoy the journey as it is taking place. I'd say that's the biggest thing, regardless of what you are trying to do or achieve or accomplish.

Q: Anything else you would like to add?

A: Everyone in the military sacrifices in some fashion, and it's

for a just cause. It's for freedom, it's for friends and family, and it is important and it is honorable and I am grateful that we have men and women in our services that are willing to do that. Not just them, but you know, I think the greater sacrifice, honestly, is by the families. We go out, and as I go through this training process, it is two and a half years of training and I'm all around the globe, Japan, Germany, Russia, training here and there and meeting new people, but it's my family at home that really sacrifices. I'm not there to help do this or that, they're the ones that truly sacrifice. So I thank you for your sacrifice, thank you for your families, for their sacrifice. It is important, it is necessary, it is noticed by many and we are grateful. As a member of the United States of America, as an individual in this nation, I am grateful for those that do that. So thank you.

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Including the Family in Care

Lee Woodruff Calls Caregivers 'Unsung Heroes'

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public
Affairs staff writer

"[I] really didn't know anything about military families until I found myself right upstairs in what was the old traumatic brain injury (TBI) ward, walking amongst some of the most incredible, humble, amazing, sacrificing men and women, moms and dads, spouses and siblings," said author and television reporter Lee Woodruff.

It was 2006 when Woodruff's life changed and she found herself at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC), now Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC). She shared her story with current WRNMMC staff during a presentation June 19 in Memorial Auditorium.

While reporting from Iraq on Jan. 29, 2006, Lee's husband, television journalist Bob Woodruff and cameraman Doug Vogt were seriously injured by a roadside bomb near Taji. Woodruff suffered a TBI and was not expected to survive. He was treated at the U.S. Air Force hospital south of Balad in Camp Anaconda, evacuated to the U.S. Army's Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, and then flown to NNMC for care.

After a lengthy recovery, Woodruff and his family were determined to help service members and their families who were similarly wounded in war.

Lee Woodruff discussed her family's journey to recovery with the WRNMMC community during her presentation here. "I have a very dis-

tinct message in terms of including the family [in patient care]," she said. "It's not really a message I so much need to deliver here because it was here I learned how that could be done well, and it's here where that needs to serve as a model for other places around the country."

"When you include the family you allow the patient to have such a greater chance of not only surviving, but of thriving once we leave your care and go home," she said. "That's when the real work begins, that's where real life begins. If we're not set up in a great way and if we don't have our feet on the ground to get through, we're not going to get very far."

"I believe one of the next frontiers we will tackle in the area of mental health is the area of the caregiver, whether

it's caregiver burnout or caregiver post-traumatic stress," Woodruff said. "The groove that gets worn down in the family is the caregiver who takes the phone call or gets the diagnosis, which in some way is just as insidious as the groove of the warrior who's been exposed to multiple traumatic experiences," she continued.

Woodruff said she speaks a lot about hope because "nobody really knows when it comes to the brain." She added providers at NNMC who treated her husband would tell her, "Anything is possible." Those were the moments that I had to hang on to," she said.

"You have to tell yourself, 'This is who he is now. You can't rewind the tape; you can't go back and edit it. What you can do going forward is to grow,'" Wood-



Photo by Bernard S. Little

Lee Woodruff discusses her husband's care at the former National Naval Medical Center, now Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, following his traumatic brain injury in 2006. Woodruff spoke at WRNMMC June 19 in the Memorial Auditorium.

ruff said. She spoke of the stories nurses would tell her of the inspirational recoveries of patients also gave her hope.

Woodruff calls family

caregivers unsung heroes for their sacrifices, love and devotion. "It's an honorable position," she concluded.

Are You Ready to Beat the Summer Heat?

By Army Capt. Janeen Mathies
WRNMMC Chief,
Environmental
Health

Summer is officially upon us, and so are the warm temperatures that come along with it.

For the prepared, these higher temperatures are the perfect complement for the enjoyable outdoor activities associated with the season. For the unprepared, however, these higher temperatures may lead to heat-related illness or injury. The good news is that, with a little awareness and proper preparation, most heat injuries are preventable.

On Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB), the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) Environmental Health (EH) Service is available to help you stay informed on the latest weather conditions. Every business day in the summer, preventive medicine techni-

cians in EH monitor the wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT) hourly between 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and provide the data on the WRNMMC intranet main page.

The WBGT is a measurement that factors in the effects of temperature, humidity, wind speed, and sunlight, providing an estimate of what you actually feel when outside in the sun. If you do not have access to the intranet, you can identify the WBGT index via the colored flags that NSAB Fitness Center staff members post outside Building 17.

Once you know the WBGT index, you can make informed decisions about your outdoor activity level and fluid consumption. The best defense against heat-related illness or injury is prevention. Implement appropriate work/rest cycles, hydrate properly to replace fluids lost through sweating, eat well-balanced and regular meals, avoid using salt



Photo by Bernard S. Little

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Janine Pugh, of Environmental Health, checks the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT), a measurement that factors in the effects of temperature, humidity, wind speed, and sunlight to provide an estimate of what it actually feels like when outside in the sun. This helps those on Naval Support Activity Bethesda make informed decisions about outdoor activity level and fluid consumption.

tablets unless directed by a doctor and wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing to encourage heat

release. Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses and by putting on

sunscreen. Limit outdoor activity to morning and evening hours to avoid the hottest part of the day.

Try to rest often in shady areas and be careful not

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madas y Policia Nacional in Santo Domingo.

For the stuffed toy drive at WRNMMC, Barak explained she and her husband helped make posters, set up collection stations around the hospital, sent a mass email to staff, and passed out flyers. In less than a week more stuffed animals were collected than needed, Barak explained. "In the command, we opened it up to every organization to donate [stuffed animals] that are either gently used or brand new," Perlow said. "We also had a lot of patients with kids who would bring the [toys] in."

After the drive was complete, the stuffed animals were cleaned, packed in crates and flown to the Dominican Republic with the

medical team for the next stage in their journey.

Rocha, who was part of the team that went to the Dominican Republic to provide care, was there to unpack the stuffed animals and distribute them to the patients.

"We would figure out how many patients we had for the day, and we would bring more than needed with us," said Rocha. "We had a little game going; two or three of us would have a panel and we would decide what [the patient's] spirit animal is and give them a stuffed animal coinciding with [it]."

"They were all so happy when they got the [stuffed animals]," said Rocha, who went into the post operation rooms to give out the toy animals. She said they not only gave them to the kids, but to parents as well.

"There was this one little girl who I could not stop taking pictures of because she kept dancing about the

room, swinging the bear around and she was so happy," Rocha added.

She said for the younger kids, sometimes the medical team would give them the stuffed animals before surgery because some were uneasy about getting IVs and anesthesia, "so they would go and hug their stuffed animal while receiving care."

Barak, who has an 11-month-old son, said if the roles were reversed, "I would be eternally grateful to know someone out there [who cares] for my child. This is really nice."

Perlow, who has a son who just turned 3, said that for her as a parent, "It felt amazing to do something like this for other kids. A lot of the kids didn't have toys because their parents could not afford it, and to do this for another country felt great."

HEAT

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to overexert yourself. Never leave a person or a pet in a closed, parked

vehicle.

A chart outlining work rest cycles and fluid replacement guidelines is available on the Environmental Health SharePoint site: [https://www.wrnmmc.intranet.capedmed.mil/ClinicalSup-](https://www.wrnmmc.intranet.capedmed.mil/ClinicalSupport/PH/EH/SitePages/Home.aspx)

port/PH/EH/SitePages/Home.aspx.

Enjoy the summer and take advantage of extended daylight hours, but before you head out the door, ask yourself, "Am I ready to beat the heat?"

NURSE

Continued from pg. 1

cal professionals to educate and support one another to ensure our efforts run in tandem with their needs," Walton said.

Hypertension and proper management of diabetes are common issues the Comfort team addresses with the host nation and health partners. "When caring for patients, we continue to be compassionate, yet sensible when addressing their health concerns in order to deliver the highest quality of care standard," the Soldier explained.

She said there have been cases and patients she feels especially excited about helping.

"Any care where you have substantially changed someone's quality of life has huge meaning," Walton explained. "We've been able to resolve blindness, restore

walking and upper body use, reduce chronic pain, and treat life-threatening injuries."

The nurse spoke of a unique honor not often afforded to those who work in the OR.

"Our patients often remember our faces," Walton said. "It is a joy. Our patients stay in the ship's intensive care unit and recovery wards for a few days after surgery. [We] often see them about the ship, or in a passageway. It is very meaningful to directly see the impact you have on their lives. Since you witness both their diagnosis and the living conditions they come from, you have a vivid picture of what they face. In the operating room, we rarely have the opportunity to watch a patient's full recovery in the days after their operation. It is rewarding to witness that full spectrum, from diagnosis to rehabilitation and discharge."

The USNS Comfort is scheduled to complete its six-month humanitarian mission in October. Officials anticipate the hospital ship serving more than 130,000 patients during Continuing Promise 2015.

As one of the largest trauma facilities in the United States, the Comfort has a full spectrum of surgical and medical services including four X-rays, one CAT scan unit, a dental suite, an optometry and lens laboratory, a physical therapy center, a pharmacy, an invasive angiography suite and two oxygen-producing plants. The hospital ship also maintains up to 5,000 units of blood. Patients arrive aboard primarily by helicopter and sometimes by small boat. Patients are assessed for medical treatment in casualty receiving and routed to surgery or other services depending on their medical condition.



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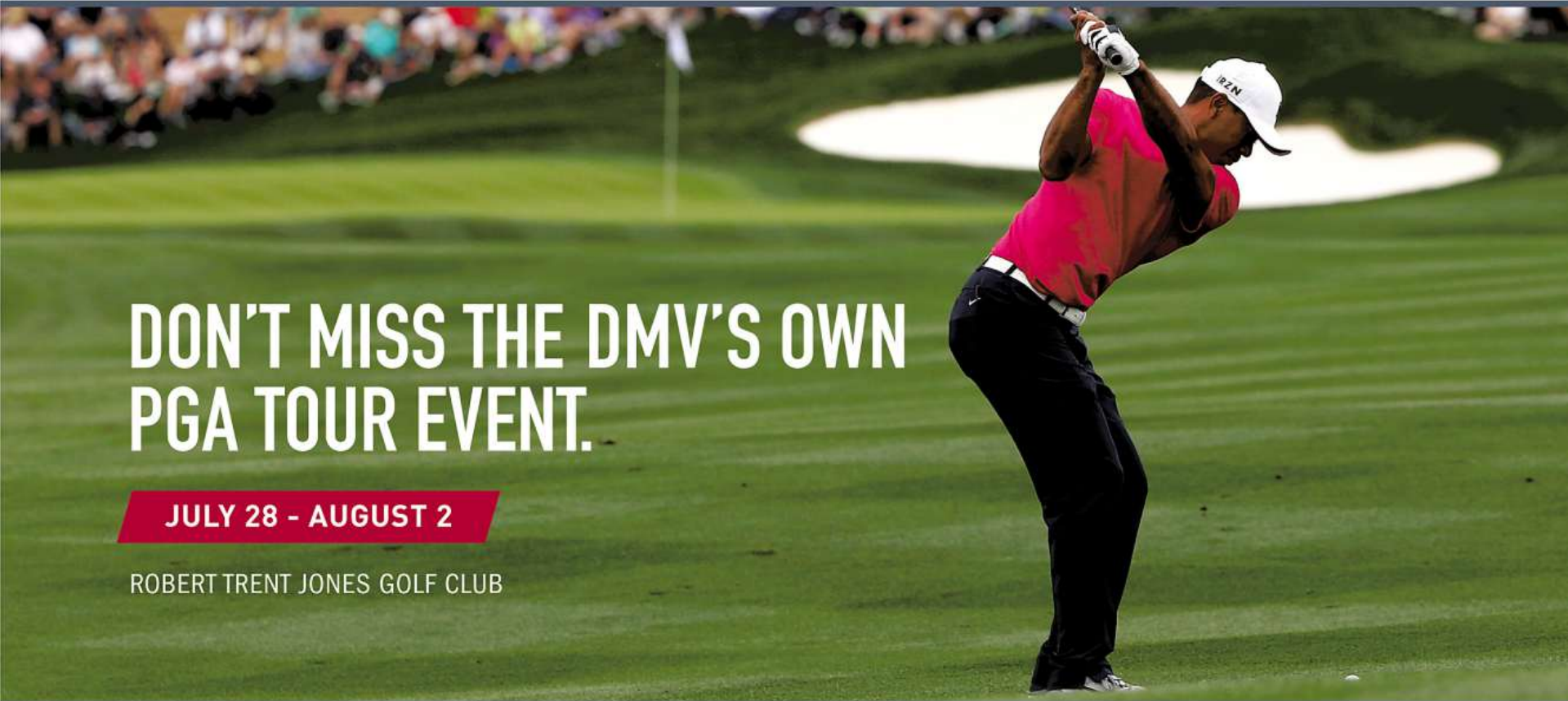
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